(c) Cases are also reported to police for investigation. In addition to disciplinary action against postal officials found involved, steps are initiated for cancellation of the agency of the agents. Besides, claims of defrauded investors are settled.

Modernisation of services of post offices

99. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any detailed exercise has been undertaken to review the role and functions of the 150 year old institution of the post office, having a large work force and vast distribution network spread over deep into the interiors of the country, in the wake of the emerging competitive courier companies and the internet rapidly taking over the traditional postal functions; and

(b) if so, the results thereof and plan of action drawn up to re-define the business of the postal services to ensure that the consumers get substantial value from products and do not migrate to other communication channels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) To give a focused attention to development of mail business products in the changing scenario, and to make use of opportunities being created by new technologies, a Business Development Directorate has been set up in the Department of Posts. It aims at developing new products and services as per the continually evolving needs of the different segments of customers and to utilize the work force of the Department and the retail network of post offices in the country for the promotion and expansion of such new products and services.

To meet the competition from couriers, business products like Speed Post, Express Parcel Post and Business Post have been introduced. A number of value additions, like free pick up, credit facility, volume-based discounts, door delivery, on line track and trace system, as also pre-mailing activities have been introduced.

Retail network of the Department of Posts have been leveraged for providing new services and generating additional revenue.

Besides using the Internet for providing an online track and trace facility, a web-based product called 'e-post' has been introduced. Customers can send 'e-post' messages like e-mail through their computers, which will be printed in 'e-post' centres in post offices near the addressees, and would be delivered like a letter. Customers can also bring their messages to post offices in written text, which would be scanned and sent like an e-mail further to be either delivered to an e-mail address, or to be printed in e-post centres near the addressees for being printed and delivered.

(b) As a result of the efforts of the Department of Posts, the revenue from business products has gone up to Rs. 747.25 crores last year from Rs. 563.64 crores in the previous year. Speed Post and Business Post, the two mail-related products, have shown a specially rapid growth. Multi-pronged action for continuous growth and improvements in tune with requirements of different customer segments, emerging economic scenario and technology development has been taken. It is a continuous process which is being closely monitored at all levels.

Violation of agreement by private operators

100. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether MTNL and BSNL filed complaint in the recent past against certain private telecom operators for passing off incoming international calls from the USA as domestic traffic to evade access charges which would been payable to MTNL/BSNL in terms of licence and interconnect agreement;

(b) the details of the complaints and compensation claimed by MTNL and BSNL from the private operators;

(c) whether following investigations, DoT has confirmed the veracity of the complaints and endorsed the volume of compensation claimed by MTNL/BSNL;

(d) the details thereof; and

(e) the action contemplated, if any, against private operators convicted for violation of agreement?